

Honorable Judge Pitlyk
US District Court, Eastern District of Missouri

Your honor,

My name is Roberta J McCleave. I recently moved to Ocala, Florida. I have been a Special Education Educator in the school districts of Dallas, Texas and Olney, Illinois for a total of 29 years.

Gavin Wynne is my nephew. His mom, Pat Wynne, is my older sister. I have known Gavin since he was adopted and taken home as a newborn. As a family, we were so overjoyed at his birth, as well as Pat and Andy becoming parents. He was a gift from God. Andy and Pat had tried to have kids but had given up all hope to ever have a child. A young teenager had delivered Gavin and immediately gave him up for adoption for a better life. Soon after the adoption, Pat stayed home with Gavin after moving back to Olney. I moved back home a few years later to Illinois from Dallas. We spent many days together with our children. Gavin became close friends to my kids. Since he was close in age too, we did so many activities together like playing in the park, going for picnics, skating, and playing at each other's homes. It was such a fun time.

Gavin was a kind, loving child. I don't remember him ever losing his temper like my kids. He was always smiley and easy going. He shared and offered kind words to others. Gavin never put anyone down. I was so impressed by this. I often babysat for him as his parents remodeled their home. He fit right in. I loved Gavin and his sweet soul. Gavin always shared and played well with my kids as well as the other cousins. My children and I adored him. Gavin was beloved by my family.

Gavin was a very bright child. I soon realized he was gifted and always excelled in school. Gavin went to a private school, St. Joe Catholic school. He and his family were very involved in the school and were members at the church. Gavin had many friends and usually made straight As. He also played in the band there. Gavin had a more difficult time in the sports area than in his academics. He was asthmatic which affected his sports output. As a preschooler, he had to take breathing treatments nightly for his severe asthma. However, he fell in love with soccer and became an excellent goalie with his dad coaching. Later, tennis became his focus. He worked hard and played for the East Richland High School Tennis team. He spent much effort and determination to become an accomplished tennis player over the years. I never once heard him complain about the obstacles he had to overcome to be a good tennis player. He was very determined. Gavin still maintained excellent grades throughout his school career as well.

Gavin had a sweet disposition and made friends easily. He was never a bully and never tore others down to better himself. I have never heard him utter a bad comment about anyone before. One time, I had imposed on his family for two months due to a contentious divorce I was going through. My kids and I moved into Pat and Andy's home for two months while events had escalated. Gavin had to give up many of his toys and bedroom space for my kids and me. It had been a volatile time, and my kids were an emotional mess. Gavin easily shared his toys and

bedroom. He was so kind to my kids even though I know we had disrupted their home. This time period became a soft place for my children and me to fall. I will never forget the love and kindness from Gavin and his family.

Gavin was very protective of my kids. Gavin included my kids in everything and made them feel welcomed and loved. A special bond was made during those two months that we still treasure. There was never a conflict between the children the whole two months. From that time on, we always enjoyed our get togethers even more and treasured one another. The kids basically grew up together and wanted the best for one another always.

Once as an adult, Gavin and his girlfriend had driven to North Carolina to see Aunt Jane and her family. Pat and Andy were already there at Aunt Jane's. My daughter, Tara, was set to get married later that year in the fall. Jane's daughter, Sarah, had just gotten married. Sarah was going to let Tara borrow some wedding decorations. I just didn't know how to get wedding items back to Illinois. I had asked Pat and Andy if they would be willing to bring wedding decorations back to Illinois for Tara's wedding. I got a big No. There were a lot of decorations, and it would have been a great inconvenience for them. On his own, Gavin decided he would do this for Tara. He packed everything in his car and went out of his way to bring it back to Tara. His car was really packed down with all that decor and wedding items, but Gavin still did this for Tara. By this time, Gavin was living in St. Louis. He was still willing to drive out of his way to give wedding items to Tara. This is the kind of person Gavin is to our family. We love him so very much.

As a small child, Gavin was molested by my niece, who was two years older than Gavin. She was in first grade I believe. After school, Pat babysat our niece. Our family did not know that she was being sexually molested by her dad at this time. Later, as an adult, our niece spoke about being molested by her father. One day, Pat knew something wasn't quite normal. After several weeks, Gavin told Pat what our niece had done to him. I always worried about our niece and Gavin because I saw firsthand how damaging molestation can be on a child's life. Our niece's mom denied there was anything going on at her home.

I will always be there for Gavin. My love for him is unconditional. I have always tried to be an emotional support for him. He will always be welcomed into my home. I hope he visits me in Florida. My hope for Gavin is that he receives help with his alcohol and drug addiction. I hope he continues his counseling to heal from the trauma he has kept hidden inside. Gavin's life will be different than the one he had dreamed of as a small child. He always knew he wanted to be a lawyer. My wish for him is to make new dreams. His life will look and be different, but it can be a meaningful life. I pray for him each and every day. I pray he accepts Jesus into his heart and repents for his sins. We are all sinners and wretched without the Lord. I pray he opens his heart to the lord and finds the peace and joy that only God can give. I pray he finds a partner to enjoy life with, maybe a family, a life well lived with meaning, character, and love. I love you, Gavin! Always.

Sincerely,
Roberta J Mcleave